



The Meditation

The Second Sunday in Great Lent

February 25th, 2018 A.D.



Jesus Healing the sick

A Contemporary Icon

*“O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” (Matt. Ch. 15, Vs 28)
from the Gospel for the day*

The Introit for The Second Sunday in Great Lent

Call to remembrance, O Lord, thy tender mercies, and thy loving-kindnesses, which have been ever of old: O let not our enemies triumph over us: deliver us, O God of Israel, out of all our troubles. Unto thee, O Lord, will I lift up my soul; O my God, I have put my trust in thee, O let me not be confounded. (Psalm 25)

Lost and Found

The Introit Prayer for today, brings to mind the story of the Prodigal Son. It gives us perhaps a peek of how he may have been feeling when his personal awakening came as he sat in the mud with the pigs and other animals belonging to the farmer who had hired him, after the young man had exhausted his inheritance.

Our Lord remarks in His parable, that it was the younger of the two sons who left his home. This may seem to point to the fact that his motive for doing so was a longing for independence or the craving for freedom, rather than for the dissolute life which was the consequence of his venturing out and away from what appears the only life he had previously known.

How easily *we* leave God! How careless we are with the rich inheritance which He gives us and which we use or abuse at our own risk and peril. When we, like the prodigal son, discover that we are far from home, we begin to realize what we have truly lost. Sometimes it's God Himself who sends us from Him, so that we may come to our senses and repent of our folly(s). We read in the Old Testament, that God sent His chosen people twice into exile. It can often be the only way one can learn and awaken.

This Season of Lent, a time of fasting, self-denial, and prayer, is but a rehearsal for those times when we will really suffer. This is a good time to learn and inwardly mark, and hold fast to the knowledge, that God's love is never more thoughtful of us, and close to us than when He seems most distant...when we are seeking answers and signs, but receive none. Or, so it may appear. God's merciful love doesn't wait for us to return to Him...it meets us on the way!
Blessed art thou, O God for all eternity. . . our only source of mercy and love!

Jesus Christ was sent to sinners. He makes known His love for them in His many parables. The father, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, doesn't address the son whom he has found again. His tearful welcome and the orders he gives to his servant speak louder than any words could do. The jealous reaction from the older brother only serves to call forth a sublime answer: "*My son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.*" (St. Luke; Chap. 15, Vs. 31).

These words are the climax of the parable; they are an echo of a phrase so often found in the Scriptures. It's an expression of *disinterested love* which thinks only of giving; and what it receives is only secondary. Thus, Jesus says to His Father in the priestly prayer: "*All mine are*

3.

thine, and thine are mine.” (St. John; Chap. 17; Vs. 10); and the bride in the great Canticle sings: *“My beloved is mine, and I am his.”* (Song of Solomon; Chap. 2, Vs. 16).

St. Cyril of Alexandria offers us some further insight about this parable; *“What then, is the object of this parable? Let us examine the occasion which led to it; for so we shall learn the truth. The blessed Luke therefore had himself said a little before of Christ the Saviour of us all, ‘And all the publicans and sinners drew near unto Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and the Scribes murmured saying: This man receives sinners and eats with them.’ As therefore the Pharisees and Scribes made this outcry at His gentleness and love to man, and wickedly and impiously blamed Him for receiving and teaching men whose lives were impure. Christ very necessarily set before them the present parable, to show them clearly this very thing, that the God of all requires even him who is thoroughly steadfast and firm, and who knows how to live holily, and has attained to the highest praise for sobriety of conduct, to be earnest in following His will, so that when they are called unto repentance, even if they be men highly blameable, he must rejoice rather, and not give way to an unloving vexation on their account.”* *

It shouldn’t be wondered that at such a reunion a banquet would be held. The outstanding figure in this parable is that of the Father. God’s goodness is the power which sustains and rules our lives. He watches over the son he has lost with the tenderest of care, and with an eager longing awaits the day when they will be reunited. When the hour arrives and the lost son returns, nothing is deemed too good for the repentant prodigal. The son returns, seeking only to be a slave in his father’s household, but instead, he is made a prince but so generous is the Father’s heart, that his tenderest words are saved for the jealous, ungrateful older son.

What a great Father it is who prepares and offers such treasures for those who return to Him with contrite hearts, full of confidence in His reception! May such fatherly love draw all those who have left Him back to the Father’s House. His holy nation, the Church beseeches in their prayers the return of all prodigals, and that one day *they may all be one! Ut unam sint!*

Something of the same thing takes place in our own lives. Self-love and self-will must die, and so we must be disciplined with the chastening rod of God’s absence. The Psalmist had the same experience: *“How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord; forever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?”* (Psalm 13; Vs. 1).

We sometimes may find ourselves in the desert, in a land where there is no water, and where we seem to be alone in an endless wasteland. Then, God speaks to us as He did to the prophet Hosea: *“A song shall be on her lips, the very music of her youth, when I rescued her from Egypt long ago.”* (Hosea; Chap 2, Vs. 15).

In solitude the soul is ripe for God’s Word; Abba Moses writes: *“The man who flees and lives in solitude is like a bunch of grapes ripened by the sun, but he who remains amongst men is like an unripe grape.”* ** In the desert, the bride meets and gives herself to Him who will lead her to the Promised Land. Then she will once again sing the song of her youth: *“All that is mine is thine, and all that is thine is mine. All mine is my true love, and I his.”*

4.

We come face to face with ourselves as God sees us and knows us in our own journey into the desert, not as we would like to be seen and known by ourselves and others. It's a tough dose of honesty with reality thrown in. The prodigal son experienced this and when he came to his senses, lamented, and repented, and then took a course of action which he felt might bring some kind of reparation. The Father bestowed upon him more than he could have ever imagined!

Let's close with a few final words from Good St. Cyril that serve as a summary and instruction: *"It is our duty therefore to conform ourselves to that which God wills: for He heals those who are sick; He raises those who are fallen; He gives a helping hand to those who have stumbled; He brings back him who has wandered: He forms anew into a praiseworthy and blameless life those who were wallowing in the mire of sin; He seeks those who were lost; He raises as from the dead those who had suffered the spiritual death. Let us also rejoice: Let us, in company with the holy angels, praise Him as being good, and loving unto men; as gentle, and not remembering evil. For if such is our state of mind, Christ will receive us, by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion with the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen."**

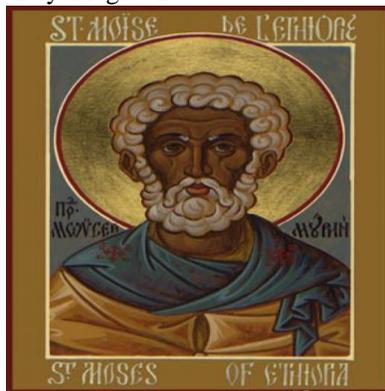
Let us ask our Lord to increase within us the spirit of contrition, the spirit of penance which will draw us ever closer to Him. Let us ask Him to fill us sufficiently with it so that if He should appear to have left us, we may never think that He has abandoned us, but the darkness is actually the shadow of His wings. *Keep us O Lord, as the apple of thine eye. Hide us under the shadow of thy wings. (Responsory verse at Compline.)*

What better hiding place can there be for us from the ills of the world?

Meditation Notes:

***St. Cyril of Alexandria: (376-444);** Patriarch of Alexandria, Early Church Father, & Doctor of the Church. Active against many early heresies and played a part at the Council of Ephesus. This is an excerpt from his homily on *the Parable of the Prodigal Son*. Feast Day: January 18th

****Abba Moses: a.k.a. Moses the Black, St. Moses the Ethiopian. (330 – 405):** An early ascetic monk-priest in Egypt. Also a noted Desert Father. Feast Day: August 28th



Priory Kalendar

For the week of:
February 25th to March 4th - A.D. 2018
In Great Lent

Sunday, February 25th ... Second Sunday in Great Lent

Comm. St. Walburga; Abs. O.S.B. - Bavaria- 8th cent.

Monday, February 26th ... St. Mechtildis; *Recl. O.S.B. - 12th cent. Germany...Lenten Fast Day*

Tuesday, February 27th ... *Feria in Lent.....Lenten Fast Day*

Wednesday, February 28th .. St. Oswald; *Abp. O.S.B. See Note 1..... Fast & Abstinence*

Thursday, March 1st St. David of Wales; *Conf. & M. 6th cent.Lenten Fast Day*

Friday, March 2nd St. Chad; *Abp. & M. - 7th cent. England.....Fast & Abstinence*

Saturday, March 3rd St. Cunnegundis; *V. O.S.B. 11th cent. Germany.....Lenten Fast Day*

Sunday, March 4th Third Sunday in Great Lent

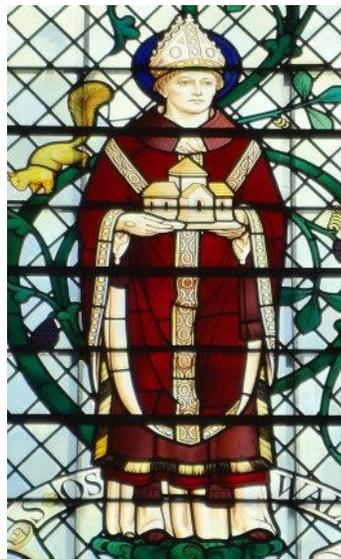
Comm. St. Casmir; Conf. - 15th cent. Poland

Note 1: February 28th – St. Oswald of Worchester and Archbishop of York, O.S.B. - Oswald received his education at a Benedictine Monastery in France and returned to England. He was consecrated Bishop of Worchester in 972, and later elevated to the see of York as Archbishop. He is noted for reforming the rules of life for both Benedictine and secular clergy in England. His feast day is usually Feb. 29th. Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory is a *privileged priory* in that it honors St. Oswald in the naming of the chapel, and is therefore allowed to celebrate his feast annually...Feb. 28th on non- Leap Years, and Feb. 29th on Leap Years.

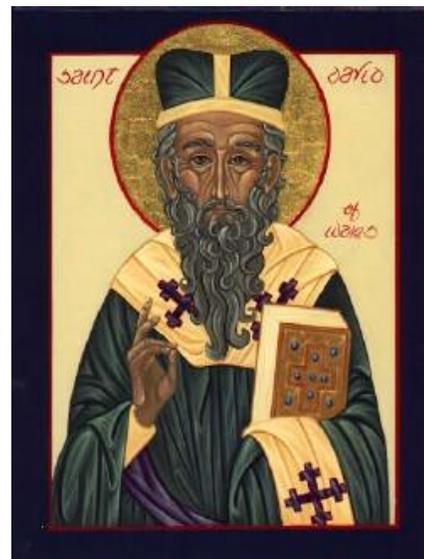


— St. Walburga —
710-779
Benedictine Abbess and Missionary
Memorial - 25 February

February 25th
St. Walburga



February 28th
St. Oswald of Worcester



March 1st
St. David of Wales

6.

"My home is in Heaven. I'm just travelling through this world" -Billy Graham



"Well done, thou good and faithful servant; Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

(St. Matthew; Chap. 25, Vs. 23)

KALENDAR KEY:

Abt. = Abbot, Abs. = Abbess, Abp = Archbishop, Anc. = Anchorite, Ancs. = Anchoress,
Ap. = Apostle, Bl. = Blessed, Br. = Brother, Bp. = Bishop, Card. = Cardinal,
C. or Conf. = Confessor, Comm. = Commemoration/Commemorate, Dcn. = Deacon, Doct.
= Doctor of the Church, Ev. = Evangelist, H. = Hermit, LBr. = Lay Brother, LSr. = Lay Sister,
K. = King, Mat. = Matron, M. = Monk, **M.M. = Month's Mind (Requiem for the recently
departed on the 30th day after death or burial).** Myr. = Martyr, N. = Nun, Obl. = Oblate, P. =
Priest, Po. = Pope, Pr. = Prior, Prs. = Prioress, R. = Recluse, **RM = Requiem Mortuorum, (Mass
and Offices for the departed once a month as designated on Kalendar).**
SDcn. = Sub Deacon, Q. = Queen, Ven. = Venerable, Vir.=Virgin, W. = Widow.

FASTING KEY: A = Abstinence, F = Fast, F & A = Fast and Abstinence

RELIGIOUS ORDER ABBREVIATIONS: C.O = Congregation of the Oratory (Oratorians),
C.P. = Congregation of the Passion (Passionists), C.S.J. = Congregation of the Society of Jesus
(Jesuits), Er. Cam. = Camaldolese Hermits, F.P. O. = Franciscans of the Primitive Observance,
O. Car. = Carmelite Order, O. Cart. Carthusian Order, O.C.D. = Order of Discalced Friars
(Carmelites), O.F.A. = Augustinian Order, O.F.M = Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans),
O.F.M. Cap = Capuchin Order, O.P. = Order of Preachers (Dominicans also called 'Blackfriars'),
O. Praem. = Order of Canons Regular (Norbertines), O.S.B. = Order of St. Benedict
(Benedictines), O.Ss. S. = Bridgettines, O.S.U = Ursulines, O.C.O. = Order of the Cistercian
Observance (Trappists/Trappistines), O.C.S.O. = Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance
(Trappists/ Trappistines). Tert. = Tertiary (Third Order religious).

About the Meditation and About Us

The Meditation is an online apostolate of [Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory](#) in Raymond, Maine, USA. We are an Anglican-Catholic Benedictine contemplative community that follows the Holy Rule of St. Benedict, the 5th century Father of Western Monasticism. We are resident within the Diocese of the Northeast (DNE), of the Anglican Church in America (ACA), a member of the worldwide Traditional Anglican Communion (TAC).

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PLEASE NOTE: In respect to our contemplative vocation and the animals in our rescue and rehab center, we do not have guest or bathroom facilities and do not regularly receive visitors. Fr. Kevin is available to hear confessions and give spiritual direction by appointment only. Please contact via email to make an appointment.



St. Mechtildis pictured on a vintage prayer card (top left)

Animal News

By Sr. Mary-Francis, O.S.B.

There is a new horse on his way to the Priory this weekend. You will be seeing spots before your eyes.....stay tuned.....!



